On these broadcasts I have told many (1) folktales about Alberta, but I have not included among these tales any of the fine Indian material I might, therefore, I want to tell you the legend of the creation of the world as told by my friend Chief Mike Mountain Horse of the Blood Indians,

"IN THE BEGINNING . . ."

The following Indian legend -- our Genesis -- was known to the Indians many, many years before the advent of the white man. While making no attempt to explain its similarities to the Bible story, I maintain that it is the true Indian version and has not been changed in any way since the Bible story was introduced to the Indians.

And one of the interesting ceremonials of the Bloods, the Sun Dance, about which Chief Mountain Horse told me,

A long time ago, there was a great flood. Water was everywhere and no living thing was left except one superman called Nahpi, and a solitary muskrat. Nahpi, realizing his responsibility as the only man to survive the great disaster, said to the muskrat: "You must dive to the bottom of this water and bring up some earth." The muskrat accordingly dived but the distance to the bottom was so great that when he returned it was as a floating dead body. Upon examination, Nahpi discovered that ~~he~~ the muskrat had reached the earth, for in his claws there was soil. Nahpi took this soil in his hands and commenced rolling it, and as he rolled the soil it multiplied and fell and blew and scattered from him until the present earth's surface was formed.

Having restored the earth, Nahpi picked up some of the soil he had generated and formed animals and birds which, after giving them breath of life, he freed to habitate the land and air.

Then after long solitude, Nahpi realized his need of a human mate. Picking up more soil, he took a rib from his side and from these

materials constructed the form of a woman, into which he breathed life. This woman became his constant companion and together they had much enjoyment in the ruling of the world.

One day, Nahpi and his woman were sitting by the river bank in deep meditation as to ways in which to improve the earth. Nahpi rose, picked up a buffalo chip from the ground, and said to his companion: "I will cast this buffalo chip into the water. If it floats, I will cause the coming generations to rise again on the fourth day following their death."

But the woman restrained him, saying: "Not so, for by this means the earth would soon become over-populated. Rather, let me take this stone and cast it into the water. If it sinks, people will die for ever, but if it floats, life will be eternal." And so, through the woman's logic and influence (superior as it has proven even to this day) death came into the world as the Indian understands it.

After a time, owing to the heavy business of governing and arranging for the future of the world, Nahpi and the woman separated, and for many moons were not together. Nahpi, in order to carry on his projects, had created many men to help him. One day when he and his band were hunting for buffalo, Nahpi became separated from the rest and went south alone as far as the Highwood River. Standing on the edge of the east bank, he observed below him in the valley a number of tepees, all of magnificent workmanship. Their chalky whiteness could be seen from afar, and the neatness and orderly fashion of the settlement greatly impressed him. He began to shout and wave to attract the attention of the owners. To his surprise

he discovered that the inhabitants were the woman whom he had created and several women companions who had been created by her. She came to meet him and explained her activities. Nahpi, deeply impressed by the resplendent encampment and the obvious advantage of having an amalgamation with the women who had made it, said: "I have created many men who are without women companions. Let us align my men on the bank of the river, and from them your women can select husbands." This the woman agreed to, and the men were accordingly aligned on the bank of the river, Nahpi standing with them.

Then the chief woman retired secretly and removed her fine clothes. She unbraided and disarrayed her hair, ~~donned~~ put on dirty tags, and was the first of the women to go forth to choose a husband. Thus disguised she walked up to Nahpi and seizing his wrist announced her choice of him as a husband. Nahpi, however, seeing but an unkempt hag and having in mind his own woman as mate, would not be led away. So the woman returned to her tepee alone. Gathering the others around her, she instructed them to go up to the bank and choose their husbands, but on no account was any of them to select Nahpi. The women did as directed; all chose husbands, and Nahpi was left standing on the bank alone. The chief woman again arrayed herself in her finery, combed and rearranged her hair, painted her face, and came forward to Nahpi. Shaking her fist at him she said, "You have made me ashamed in the eyes of all other women by not coming with me when I chose you for a husband. Now you will remain standing on that spot, but not as Nahpi, for I will prepare a charm which will turn you into a pine tree." And this huge pine tree, is still

standing in solitude somewhere along the banks of the Highwood River.

So runs, Old Chief Mountain Horse, the tribal legend of the formation of our earth, and of the subsequent development of its life; a story, to my mind, similar in many respects to the Genesis of the white man.

Possibly some of my listeners have seen the popularized version of the circle Sun Dance, but I think not many realize the intricacy of this festival. To me, a most interesting part of this Blackfoot ceremony is the creation of the Sun Dance lodge.

SUN DANCE CENTRE POLE

The frame work of a Sun Dance lodge is divided into several sections somewhat similar to a horse corral. Each of these sections consists of two long forked posts and a couple of other poles, one a little longer than the other.

The task of chopping down and hauling these posts is placed in the hands of minor chiefs, or some other responsible persons. After these saplings are cut and hauled, a couple of post holes are dug in the place selected and the straight ends of the forked posts are placed therein and tampered down. This accomplished, the shorter pole is placed crosswise on top of the two forked posts, which tends to hold them securely in place. The longer pole is then propped up on the cross pole. This is only one section completed. Others are done in a similar manner, and after completion of the whole, the finished framework resembles a high horse corral.

Then follows the ceremony of selection of the centre pole. At this ceremony the great secret Horn Society, Senior Lodge of the Blackfoot Confederacy, officiates. The task of selecting a tree for this purpose is placed in charge of two able warriors who proceed on horseback to the nearby thickets, and after making their selection, and placing a mark thereon, they report back to the main body.

The Horn Society, dressed in their best beaded regalia, and accompanied by their women members, then proceed to the designated spot. At approximately 200 yards from their destination, a halt is called. Four renowned and able warriors are then chosen from

those present to go forward to make a final official discovery of the tree already selected, they advancing, single file, into the wood. These men then imitate a kid fox's howl, to indicate that they have discovered the marked tree. On hearing this, everybody, including the women members, begin to sing to the beating of drums. The four men who made the final selection now appear running to and fro in single file as they emerge from the wood. As they run they circle once, to signify that they have located their objective. Coming to a halt about 25 yards from the main body, each man alternately kicks and scatters with his feet a conglomeration of sticks and buffalo chips heaped in front of the members standing in a row. At this point another warrior from the ranks asks them for news. But before they utter a word to him, he must relate in a loud voice any heroic achievement credited to him in his youth. After this, he turns to the four for instructions concerning details of the tree's location, and on being informed acquaints the others with this information. The four men then relate their individual war achievements, how they led war parties in former days, and how they are now going to lead the Horn Society to their destination. After these ceremonies every one approaches the tree on foot, and on arriving at their destination, all sit down. A fire is then kindled by a member chosen especially for this task. He alone is authorized to kindle fires, light pipes used for smoking, and turn incense. No matches are used for lighting the pipes.

At this point, a member will fill his pipe and offer it to one of the wise old men in attendance, requesting him to pray that he may have good luck in his various undertakings and bring up his

children properly. The patriarch then takes the pipe and holding the stone bowl in his right hand, and pointing upward with the stem, prays for every member present, and for the whole tribe in general.

At the conclusion of this prayer every one responds by saying "Hey", which signifies "Amen". Then the patricarch returns the pipe to the man who offered it to him, who lights it from the fire and offers it to each member separately. Each member takes four puffs at it, at the same time stroking the ~~him~~ offerer's body twice on either side. After this, four sweet-grass incenses are lighted at the base of the chosen tree, each burning at one of the four points of the compass. During the lighting of this incense every one present prays that the tree may fall in an easterly direction; if not, that it may strike the ground pointing west, and that all branches may remain intact as the tree falls. If any limbs of the tree break off while falling, it will denote ill luck for some member of the Society officiating at the ceremony. Should the tree fall in a northerly or southerly direction, a death in the family of someone officiating is indicated.

After the first four incenses lighted have died out, another four are lighted. The Senior Horn member then picks up two axes for use in felling this tree. These he consecrates by holding each one separately over the fumes of an incense. He then selects two able-bodied members from those present, instructing each to kneel beside an incense, those on the north and south sides being indicated. While these two members are kneeling, the sage orders them to pray for protection from harm while chopping down the

the tree, and to include in their request a long and happy life with their families. The assembly remains silent during the progress of these supplications, which when completed, the warrior picks up one of the axes and holding it for a moment over the fumes of the incense, hands it to one of the kneeling men. He does the same thing with the other axe, handing it to the other kneeling man. Now, kneeling himself, his right hand on the base of the tree, he prays as follows:

> "Dweller of the Heavens, who gave us Indians the ceremony of Sun Dance, I pray you to help us at this time and use your divine power in guarding this tree so as not to break any of its branches when it strikes the ground."

After this short invocation, he arises and requests the lighter to ignite all four incenses. He then instructs his companions with the axes to arise, which they do. Approacing first the one standing due south, he grasps his arms below the elbows and makes four imitation moves as if chopping down a tree. At each alternative move, the axe is held over the sacred fumes as before. This performance is repeated on the other member standing opposite. After these ceremonies the actual chopping begins, and while the work is in progress all members are requested to pray.

If the tree falls in an easterly or westerly direction it is utilized. If it strikes the ground contrary to these directions it is abandoned and a new one is selected for the purpose. A tree never strikes the ground with terrific force because it is never chopped right off, but is allowed to fall gradually. While swaying in mid-air everybody present must shout continuously until it falls. It is

then trimmed, peeled, and hauled to camp at the head of a huge procession, where it is unloaded to await further ceremony.

Next week I will tell other tales related by Chief Mountain Horse, about the Customs + Lore of his people, the Blood Indians of Southern Alberta.